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The
\$100,000 Club Paper

A

PLAY FOR CLUB WOMEN

One-Act Comedy

By

BARBARA RING

II



Arlington Heights :: :: :: :: Massachusetts

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PERSONS REPRESENTED



MR. GEORGE BARRINGTON, father.

MRS. BERTHA BARRINGTON, his wife.

MARY ANN, elder daughter (18).

SYBIL, younger daughter (16).

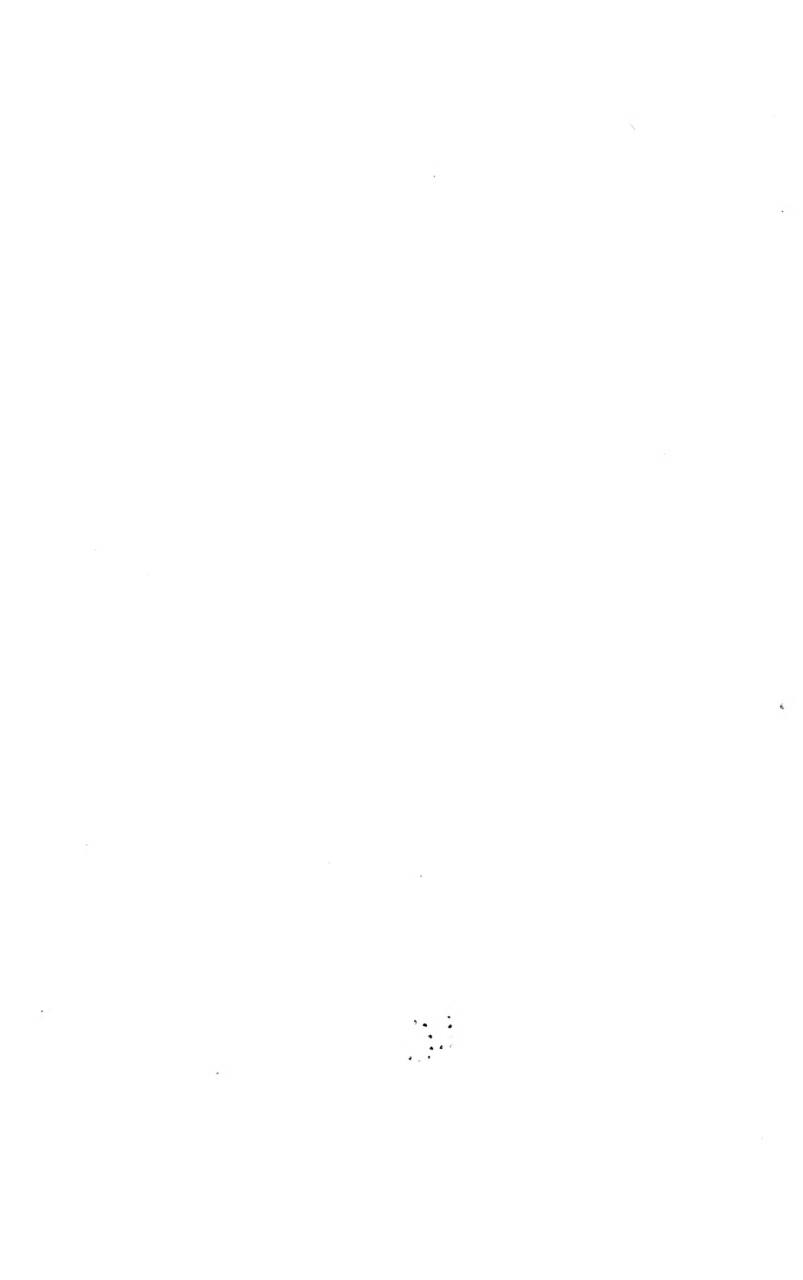
JOHN, eleven-year-old son.

PETER, MARY ANN's lover.

ROSALIND, new colored maid.

MRS. DE MARR, neighbor.

BUTCHER.

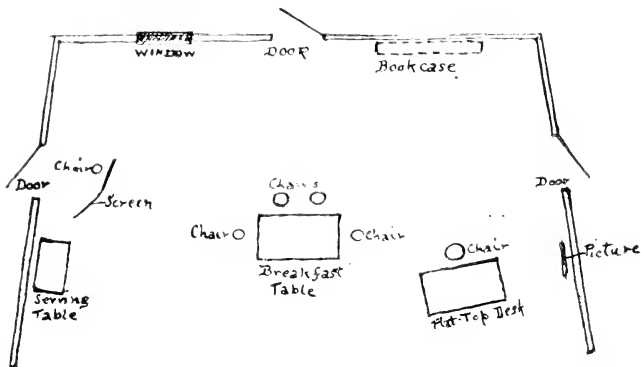


The \$100,000 CLUB PAPER

A ONE-ACT COMEDY

By Barbara Ring

SCENE: Dining-room. Putty colored walls; blue and old-rose chintz draperies in window; rug of blue, old rose and ivory; mahogany serving table with candle-stick and blue chintz shade at each end, water glasses, pitcher and big book in centre, right stage; desk, flat-top, with papers and two big books and telephone on top, down stage left; door, blue chintz screen half covering it, chair behind screen, right upper stage; picture, typical of family life, left centre stage; door, back stage centre; window with flowering plant in basket, back stage right; bookcase filled with very large books, two big books and clock on top shelf, back stage left; breakfast table set for five persons, centre stage.



DISCOVERED: [MR. BARRINGTON, *large man of explosive disposition, grey hair, iron-grey moustache, dressed in business suit, at breakfast table reading newspaper.* MRS. BARRINGTON *about thirty-eight, attractive, good-natured, pleasing, affectionate, in simple blue dress, sits opposite MR. BARRINGTON.*]

MR. BARRINGTON [*Reading newspaper, lowers it, looks over breakfast table, then sweeps his hand over it disgustedly.*] Nothing but dishes! Why isn't our breakfast on the table? [*Throws down newspaper.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. You see, George, piling food on the table is old-fashioned. Rosalind, our new maid, is up-to-date. She puts nothing on, but passes everything.

[*Enter ROSALIND, right door, colored maid, fearful, when not grinning; awkward, jerky; hair done in psychic knot; waitress cap and apron; she goes to serving table, pours water into two glasses, places one at MRS. BARRINGTON'S right, but spills MR. BARRINGTON'S as she places it. MR. BARRINGTON glares at ROSALIND. She passes fruit, rolls and coffee to MR. and MRS. BARRINGTON.*]

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Begins to eat.*] I don't care what's up-to-date. You know well enough that when I sit down I want my breakfast right in front of me ready to eat.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Yes, dear, it's all my fault. I forgot to tell Rosalind about it. We can't expect a new maid to know everything the first morning.

MR. BARRINGTON. Don't you think you are carrying things with a pretty high hand when you get a second maid without asking me?

MRS. BARRINGTON. I confess I should have asked you, but—

MR. BARRINGTON. Well, then, why didn't you?

[*As ROSALIND goes out, right door, she casts frightened glances at MR. BARRINGTON.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, you know it depends upon Aunt Mary's will and—that makes you so angry—

MR. BARRINGTON. What has that fool will to do with your adding another maid?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Don't you see, when we get the \$100,000 Auntie willed to me we can afford to keep two maids.

MR. BARRINGTON. Well, when you have done the crazy things that confounded will calls for, it'll be time enough to add expense.

MRS. BARRINGTON. That just's the point, George. I had to have this maid now to get time to write my paper.

MR. BARRINGTON. Oh! [*Looking around the room.*] that's why the kids aren't up to breakfast. You are wasting your time scribbling instead of looking after them.

MRS. BARRINGTON. George, dear, be reasonable. The will says I must be a member of the Club, and the only way to get in is to present a paper.

MR. BARRINGTON. Oh, that paper is your favorite topic because you know I don't want you to belong to any of those women's clubs, and least of all to that detestable paper-writing club.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Tell me—why are you so prejudiced against women's clubs?

MR. BARRINGTON. Do you think I want you to get a lot of new-fangled ideas and uncomfortable notions? Women do altogether too much thinking nowadays, anyway.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Mothers have to do a good deal of thinking to keep up with their children. Why, Mary Ann makes me feel that I haven't and never did have a single new idea.

MR. BARRINGTON. Don't you worry about new ideas. I have enough for us both.

MRS. BARRINGTON. I am quite sure you have, dear, and I do want to please you; but if I'm not a member of that club within a year we'll lose the \$100,000.

MR. BARRINGTON. Go ahead and join, but why under the sun do you insist upon writing on such an outlandish subject?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Why shouldn't I write upon a subject that appeals to me?

MR. BARRINGTON. But Hottentots—what are Hottentots to you or anybody else?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Why, that darling old Hottentot mammy saved my life—

MR. BARRINGTON. Well, that's the limit. Just because a nurse was good to you when you were a child, and she happened to be a *Hottentot*, you are going to make yourself ridiculous by writing a paper on "*The Perpetuation of the Hottentot Race.*"

[*Enter ROSALIND, who serves bread to MRS. BARRINGTON, but drops butter (cheese may be used) on floor when she serves MR. BARRINGTON. She stops to pick it up.*]

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Ironically.*] Rosalind, when you've buttered the carpet, might I have some butter for my bread?

ROSALIND. Yassah. [*Serves MR. BARRINGTON and goes out right.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. I want the members of the club to know what a noble, unselfish and perfectly splendid race the Hottentots really are.

MR. BARRINGTON. There you go again into rhapsodies over Hottentots.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Why, George, they are like the almost extinct buffalo—nearly all dead. I feel it my duty to take care of the remains.

MR. BARRINGTON. Yes, an obituary on the buffalo would be just as fit a subject.

MRS. BARRINGTON. You don't understand—

MR. BARRINGTON. [*In great disgust.*] I understand enough to know that everybody will laugh at you—my wife. Really, Bertha, it's too galling.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Rises, goes to bookcase, takes book, opens, and peruses.*] All these books from the public library are full of such interesting things about the Hottentots.

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Turning round.*] There's a library full of books on the anatomy of the big toe, but would you choose that for a subject?

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Comes back to table. Looks at*

MR. BARRINGTON *sweetly and puts her hand on his shoulder.*] I would—if it were your big toe, dear.

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Shrugs his shoulders.*] Entirely ruled by your feelings. Have you no judgment?

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Nonchalantly.*] Yes, I judge, dear, this is not the time to discuss the subject of my paper.

MR. BARRINGTON. Why not?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, the time is approaching—

MR. BARRINGTON. To choose a new subject.

MRS. BARRINGTON. I can't do it, George. If my paper isn't done by ten o'clock today, we shall not get the money.

MR. BARRINGTON. What do you mean?

MRS. BARRINGTON. This is the last day allowed by the will.

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Leans excitedly toward MRS. BARRINGTON.*] Great Scott! Why didn't you tell me before that we are running the risk of losing the \$100,000? [*Rises.*] You are wasting your time talking to me when you should be writing. I'll get out now and leave you alone. [*Grabs pen and paper from desk.*] Here, take your pen and paper. Write! Don't let anybody in! Don't lose a minute! Write on anything,—Fiji Islanders, Turks, Kaffirs, Kalmucks, Gorillas, Hottentots, anything, only write, write, and let nothing stop you!

[MR. BARRINGTON *pecks rather than kisses* MRS. BARRINGTON. *Rushes out rear door.*]

[*Enter ROSALIND, right door; takes away dishes.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Rosalind, please call my daughters and Master John for breakfast.

ROSALIND. Yas, ma'am.

[MRS. BARRINGTON *goes to desk, and arranges her papers, pencils, opens book, and begins to copy.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. "The Hottentots lived on the Southwest coast of Africa—" [*Still reading, asks absent mindedly*] Oh, Rosalind, did the—ah—Hottentots—answer when you called?

ROSALIND. W'at yo' say, ma'am?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Did the—oh, the—children answer when you called?

ROSALIND. Oh, de chilluns! I call tree times, I did, en de little boy sez he only year me de las' time I call.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Set the table, anyway, Rosalind, and I'll ring the bell.

[*Opens left door and rings bell, goes to desk, takes out a pencil, makes notes on paper.*]

ROSALIND. Mus' I put de breakfas, ma'am, on de table de way de marser he say?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Oh, no, Rosalind; I prefer to have the dishes passed to each member of the family. Mr. Barrington likes that way of serving, too, but, Rosalind, he doesn't know he likes it.

ROSALIND. [*Setting the table.*] De marser by w'at he sez dis mawnin' he reckon he know, but he mout change er his mine.

[*Enter at left door MARY ANN, tall, athletic and man-nish, in old-rose middy blouse, white skirt, white sneakers, followed by SYBIL, who is dressed in a plain long tier covering her costume, long blonde hair tied back with ribbon.*]

MARY ANN. [*Takes place at table, left centre.*] Good morning, mother.

SYBIL. Good morning. [*Kisses mother; takes place beside MARY ANN.*]

MARY ANN. Father gone?

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Comes to place at table, bringing her book.*] Yes, my dear, he hurried off to give me time to write. He didn't like it because you weren't down to breakfast.

MARY ANN. Does he expect us to enjoy listening to him? [*ROSALIND serves the breakfast as before, while MRS. BARRINGTON reads. MARY ANN and SYBIL eat.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Whether you enjoy it or not courtesy demands that you eat breakfast with us.

MARY ANN. Courtesy, indeed! Mother, don't try to deceive us about father. We know he does nothing but growl at breakfast, and I, for one, will not come down until he has gone.

MRS. BARRINGTON. He doesn't growl, he's just—expressive.

MARY ANN. You know he does, but you're altogether too easy with him. You ought to join the suffragists; they'd teach you how to manage him.

MRS. BARRINGTON. He seems quite able to manage himself.

MARY ANN. Of course he does, and to lord it over you, too.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, Mary Ann, when you have a husband—

MARY ANN. When I do, he won't be like father and keep me from joining clubs!

MRS. BARRINGTON. But if he should, what would you do?

MARY ANN. I wouldn't wait for anybody's will. I'd make him feel—feel—the strength of this right arm. [*Doubles fist.*]

SYBIL. Do you call that a beautiful way of behaving, Mary Ann?

MARY ANN. Beauty and art are your gods, Sybil. Do you know what I think about your beautiful and artistic dancing?

SYBIL. I can guess, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN. It's symbolic slush.

SYBIL. That's because you can't do it, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN. Do it? No, I do things that are real; no fairy fantasies for me.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Has been pouring the coffee, which ROSALIND passes.*] Mary Ann, you're always talking about doing real things. Here's something for you.

MARY ANN. All right; just tell me what it is.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Find some way of getting John up when he's called.

MARY ANN. I'll show you how I can do that.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, wait until you finish your breakfast.

MARY ANN. No, mother, I'll do it now. [*Goes out left door.*]

[ROSALIND drops a platter of bacon, which she picks up bit by bit. SYBIL giggles; ROSALIND snickers.]

[Enter MARY ANN dragging JOHN, a boy of eleven, kicking and squirming in his pajamas, to right centre.]

MARY ANN. Next time you'll get up when you're called.

JOHN. [Rubbing his sleepy eyes.] For the love of Mike, Mary Ann, what do you think you are doing?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Now, John, go upstairs and dress. [MARY ANN sits down at breakfast table as before.]

JOHN. Mary Ann, you brought me down; take me back.

MARY ANN. [Eating.] Watch me take you back. If you don't start in ten seconds [Looking at the clock], I'll help you up a little more forcibly than I brought you down.

JOHN. Huh! Mary Ann, you couldn't hurt a flea.

MARY ANN. Flea or no flea, I'm watching the clock.

JOHN. Keep a-watching.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Do hurry, boy, and I'll let you play with Billy.

JOHN. Play with Billy? Gee! that sounds good. Is Mary Ann going to play with Peter—Peter, sweetheart eater, Peter, Peter, tennis beater?

MARY ANN. [Chases JOHN round the table.] I'll Peter you in just two seconds.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Children! I want this morning to write.

JOHN. You can't do it unless you get a new pen, maw.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [Surprised.] Why not?

JOHN. 'Cause your pen has committed suicide.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [Laughing.] How's that?

JOHN. It jumped in the ink-well and got drowned. [SYBIL and MRS. BARRINGTON laugh.]

MARY ANN. Don't get too funny. [Looking at the clock.] One second—

JOHN. [Gradually crawls to right centre.] I'm waiting for you, Sis.

MARY ANN. [*Gets up and stamps her foot.*] Don't Sis me, I'll— [*Makes a move toward JOHN, but he evades her by rushing out left door. MARY ANN sits down again.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Rosalind, please take cereal, muffins, and milk upstairs to John.

ROSALIND. Yes, ma'am. [*ROSALIND goes out right.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. It will save time while Rosalind is getting John's breakfast—

MARY ANN. Let him do without. What a fuss you make over him.

MRS. BARRINGTON. If you girls clear away the dishes,—

MARY ANN. That isn't fair. Let Rosalind take off the dishes.

MRS. BARRINGTON. No, Mary Ann, you see for yourself that Rosalind is busy, and to save time you must help. [*MARY ANN scowls. MRS. BARRINGTON sits down at her desk and writes, while SYBIL and MARY ANN get up, pile up dishes, one middle right, the other middle left.*]

MARY ANN. [*Counting the dishes.*] There are 1-6-8-10-14-18-20-35 dishes; that's eighteen for you, Sybil, and seventeen for me.

SYBIL. No, you clear away eighteen and I'll clear away seventeen. [*SYBIL stands looking at dishes, while MARY ANN begins to take away dishes.*]

MARY ANN. Do you hear me? Eighteen is you— [*SYBIL takes pile of dishes to serving table.*]

SYBIL AND MARY ANN. [*SYBIL returns to right centre, MARY ANN to left centre.*] Yours, yours.

MARY ANN. I am the older; you must do as I bid you. [*Both take dishes away.*]

SYBIL. You are taller, but that's no excuse for your rudeness. [*There is only one plate left.*]

MARY ANN. [*Pointing to plate.*] There's your last plate.

SYBIL. [*Pointing to plate.*] Your last plate.

MARY ANN. Pick it up.

SYBIL. Pick it up yourself.

MARY ANN. [Dramatically.] I shall not take up that plate.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Girls, stop, stop! Don't you know that you must help and not hinder?

MARY ANN. Mother, I am trying to help by giving Sybil a little discipline. She is utterly spoiled.

MRS. BARRINGTON. If taking that plate off improves Sybil's morals, what will happen to yours?

MARY ANN. Oh, I am willing to sacrifice my morals for the sake of improving hers.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Impatiently.*] Girls, girls, if I don't get this manuscript written by 10 o'clock, [*Looking at the clock*] we shall not get one cent of Aunt's money.

MARY ANN. Principle is what I care about, not money. It's Sybil's duty to take that plate away. Sacrifice principle for a plate? Well, not much—

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Distressed.*] Have you no consideration for me?

SYBIL. [*Goes to her mother, puts her arms around her neck, kisses her.*] Mummy, dear, I'll put the plate away. I don't care about principle or money, but I love you. [*MOTHER pats SYBIL'S hands. SYBIL takes plate away. MARY ANN claps her hands triumphantly.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Now you may go to Aunt Ellen's for the day. Rosalind will answer the doorbell and keep me from being disturbed.

MARY ANN. That's jolly; tennis for me; good-bye. [*Goes out rear door.*]

SYBIL. [*Rushes up to MRS. BARRINGTON.*] Oh, mother, have you forgotten I am to dance the Syrinx this afternoon?

MRS. BARRINGTON. The Hottentots put your dance completely out of my mind.

SYBIL. To make sure of doing it right, I need one more rehearsal. Won't you play it just once?

[*Enter ROSALIND right door; begins to put the books into the case.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. I can't spare the time, Sybil. I

have several new pages to write, and all these pages to copy. [*Holding up fifteen pages of manuscript.*]

SYBIL. Mother, you couldn't let me make a fizzle of my dance, could you?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Giving up that much time may make me lose \$100,000.

SYBIL. Just once, mummy, dear, please. [*Goes to her mother, puts her arm round her, and kisses her.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Yes, yes, if you'll hurry and change your dress. [*Sighs as Sybil goes out left door.*] At this rate of speed I'll lose the money, but, dear me, what can I do? [*Waves arms impatiently.*] Oh, Rosalind, don't touch the books. Take the table away for Sybil's dance.

ROSALIND. Miss Sybil she gwine ter dance like she did yistiddy. I kin dance misse'f, [*Takes few steps like jig*] but I nebber see nobody dance des like dat Miss Sybil, but I tinks I can.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Writes rapidly, reads, and does not see ROSALIND dance.*] "South coast of Africa and had light skins and long, intellectual-looking foreheads. They were undoubtedly of Semitic origin—" [*ROSALIND imitates SYBIL's dancing, throwing up arms and throwing her feet out. Meanwhile she watches MRS. BARRINGTON for fear of being caught. ROSALIND sees SYBIL coming and makes a hurried, awkward exit.*]

[*SYBIL enters left door dressed in flowing costume, sandals, flowing hair with garland of flowers in her hands.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Hurry now, you mustn't waste one second.

SYBIL. No, I wont. [*Throws kisses to mother as she goes out.*] You are just the sweetest mother!

MRS. BARRINGTON *goes off left door; plays piano while SYBIL dances an interpretative dance; exit SYBIL left door.*]

SYBIL. [*Off stage.*] Thank you so much, mummy dear. My dance will go all right now.

[*Enter MRS. BARRINGTON left door, sits down at her desk, picks up book, goes over papers nervously, etc.*]

Where was I at? Oh, yes—"and they were undoubtedly of Semitic origin." [*Looks up and thinks aloud.*] I shall have to explain that to the ladies of the club. That means that they were white originally, but that climate and intermarriage so altered their color and features that they have been classed [*Looks wise as she pronounces*] "ethnologically as negroes." [*Expresses satisfaction.*] That's a long word; sounds well too. "They were a peace-loving people." [*Scream heard from outside right door.*]

ROSALIND. [*Enters right door, frightened and with rolling eyes, calls out.*] He's gwine ter ketch me. [*She holds her hands dropped from waist, trembling and shaking in line with her waist, and jumps up and down.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Alarmed.*] What's the matter?

ROSALIND. [*Still screaming, agitated as before, clutches MRS. BARRINGTON.*] De man's gwine ter kill me.

MRS. BARRINGTON. What man?

ROSALIND. [*Peering around corner.*] De man out dar in dat kitchen, ma'am. [*Tries to shield herself behind MRS. BARRINGTON.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Are you getting behind so that he will kill me first?

ROSALIND. No, no, ma'am, don't yo' go. [*MRS. BARRINGTON tries to free herself.*] Don't yo' go, ma'am!

MRS. BARRINGTON. Rosalind, let me go; let me go. [*ROSALIND'S hold relaxes; MRS. BARRINGTON goes to right door, and timidly peers into kitchen; MRS. BARRINGTON starts back.*]

ROSALIND. [*Begins to holler louder.*] He's gwine ter kill us, ma'am. [*Man in butcher's clothes and bushy red whiskers with a big carving knife in his hand comes in.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Why, this is the butcher, Rosalind. [*To BUTCHER.*] What's the matter?

BUTCHER. Madam, there's something the matter with her. She began to yell when I asked her—

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Turning to ROSALIND.*] Rosalind, stop screaming. This man won't hurt you.

ROSALIND. I standin' a' de sink a washin' de dishes, ma'am, en dis man he com' mighty nigh me wid dat big knife, en he ax' me—

MRS. BARRINGTON. Asked what?

ROSALIND. Fo' wun er m' ribs.

MRS. BARRINGTON. For one of your—

ROSALIND. Yes, ma'am, he ax' m' did I hab a rib ter spare?

BUTCHER. [*Interrupting.*] Madam, that ain't what I asked her.

ROSALIND. Y's, ma'am, dat's w'at he ax' m'.

BUTCHER. [*Threateningly brandishes knife towards ROSALIND when MRS. BARRINGTON turns her back.*] I didn't—I asked—

ROSALIND. A takin' wun er m' ribs, he'd sho' kill—

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*To BUTCHER.*] What did you say to her?

BUTCHER. Madam, I asked her how about a spare rib today. [*MRS. BARRINGTON laughs; BUTCHER brandishes knife at ROSALIND behind MRS. BARRINGTON'S back, and ROSALIND falls back.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Laughing.*] Didn't you ever hear of a spare rib, Rosalind? He didn't want one of your ribs. He wanted us to buy a spare rib of pig. Nothing today, thank you, butcher.

ROSALIND. 'Pon m' soul, ma'am, I nebber did wurk for des wun missus down South, en' h'r bu'cher, ma'am, he nebber did ax' m' dat.

BUTCHER. Madam, that old black nigger can't tell a rib from a pig's foot.

ROSALIND. Dat ole red bu'ch'r he' so 'cited he dunno nice color' lady w'en h' see wun. [*BUTCHER, in disgust, goes out right door.*] He sho' skeer'd me, ma'am. I nebber did year no man use dat sorter landwidge befo'. I des tink I ain't a gwine ter stay.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Puts her hand on ROSALIND'S shoulder.*] Rosalind, you mustn't go.

ROSALIND. I des hatter go, ma'am.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Rosalind, I can't see anybody. If you go, who will answer the door?

ROSALIND. Yo' ole cook, ma'am, she answe'r.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Goes to her desk.*] Rosalind, go into the kitchen and do your work.

ROSALIND. Ma'am, I des can't, nohow. Dat bu'cher, he skeer'd me ouden m' skin, en I des too feered ter stay in dat kitchen. Den de marser he sez dat I mus' put eb'rytin' on de table; you sez put nuthin on, den you sez Marsers change er his mine. I reckon if he ain't done dat, he mout be gittin' mad wid me.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Mad with you? Well, you'll get used to that.

ROSALIND. I nebber could gedder useter de Marsers nor to de bu'cher, ma'am; den, dat Marsers John, he v'ry funny. I too skeer'd ter stay wid yo'. Moighty sorry, kaze I tink yo' v'ry nice lady.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Oh, for my old Hottentot nurse who never left me!

ROSALIND. She color'd lady too, ma'am?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Yes, Rosalind, her great-great-grandmother might have been related to yours. How I did love—

ROSALIND. W'at's dat you say, ma'am, dat yo' lub m'?

MRS. BARRINGTON. I love the Hottentots so much, Rosalind, that I am writing a paper about them.

ROSALIND. Den, I des hatter stay, ma'am, cause lub's de wun ting I nebber kin getter way frum nohow.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Thank you, Rosalind. Now go upstairs and make the beds. Remember that I love you and you'll forget the butcher. [*ROSALIND looks affectionately at MRS. BARRINGTON and goes out left door.*]

ROSALIND. Dat's des w'at I gwine ter do, ma'am.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Sits down at her desk. She writes and reads.*] "These peace-loving people were mostly shepherds, and were so fond of their cattle and sheep that they couldn't bear to kill—[*Stops and listens.*] to kill—Rosalind! [*Rear doorbell rings.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Emphatically.*] I shall not go

to the door. [*Calls.*] Rosalind! Rosalind! [*Goes on writing and reading very fast.*] “After the Hottentots were driven away by the Dutch farmers, they inter-married with the Bantues and gradually lost their—” [*Rear doorbell rings again. She puts hands to ears.*] Doorbells! “Later, the English settled—settled—” [*MRS. BARRINGTON moves restlessly in her chair as she hears the turning of the door knob, and she tries to hide behind the bookcase just as a woman turns the door knob and looks in.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Desperately.*] I am driven out, too. I shall have to— [*Pulls herself together and goes to the door.*]

[*Enter MRS. DE MARR, thin and dowdily dressed in black silk dress, gold chain, cameo breastpin, and with a book in her hand. She speaks in a high-pitched nasal voice and has a habit of sniffing.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Shaking hands with MRS. DE MARR.*] How do you do, Mrs. De Marr? I am so sorry you waited. [*Offering a chair.*] Do sit down.

MRS. DE MARR. You're sorry I waited— Well, I'm going right away.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Apologetic.*] Why, Mrs. De Marr, I am delighted to see you. I confess I was rather busy stuffing papers into the waste basket.

MRS. DE MARR. Really, you looked to me as if you were dodging behind the bookcase. [*Looks pointedly at bookcase.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, you see I was expecting Rosalind, my new maid, to answer the bell.

MRS. DE MARR. [*With great surprise and interest; sits down.*] A new maid! So you are going to put on style when you get your aunt's money? Rosalind? Ahem—with a name like that, I suppose she is one of those trig and natty French maids.

[*Enter ROSALIND left door, with broom, duster, dustpan, and towels in her hands. MRS. DE MARR looks at ROSALIND from head to foot, surprise changing gradually to contempt.*]

ROSALIND. Did de do'r b'll ring, ma'am? [*When she sees MRS. DE MARR she drops the dustpan.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Too late, Rosalind, but next time—

ROSALIND. Nex' time I year de b'll I run, ma'am. [*ROSALIND picks up the dustpan, but as she meets MRS. DE MARR's stare, she drops the broom. With her scared eyes still fixed on MRS. DE MARR, she slowly picks up the broom, but drops the duster. Picks up duster, drops towels, and nervously goes out left door.*]

MRS. DE MARR. Ha! ha! [*Laughs.*] So she is going to run! Well, I should hope so! Really I almost forgot— [*Laughs.*] that I came to bring you [*Laughs.*] this book. [*Holds out book to MRS. BARRINGTON.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Rises and takes book.*] Oh! a book for me?

MRS. DE MARR. Yes, my sister who works in the library sent it.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Glancing through the pages of the book.*] Oh, this is the book I tried to get yesterday—How very thoughtful of your sister—

MRS. DE MARR. Yes, she said you were terribly disappointed because she couldn't get it for you yesterday.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Indeed, I was—how very kind of you to bring it.

MRS. DE MARR. My sister wondered what in the world anybody could want of such a book—. Let me see—the title is—"Hottentots in an African Jungle."

MRS. BARRINGTON. There are some references in it I want—

MRS. DE MARR. Oh! you expect to find out about—about—your new maid. [*Laughs.*] Ha! ha! she does look like a Hottentot—from a jungle too, ha! ha!

MRS. BARRINGTON. No! no! Mrs. De Marr, that isn't what I wanted the book for.

MRS. DE MARR. [*Glancing round the room.*] Oh, it isn't—well—ahem—you said something about papers. [*Looking at desk.*] What a lot you have on your desk! My, but I hope you're not trying to be "litrary."

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, not exactly—but I am writing a paper—

MRS. DE MARR. Oh! you're writing a paper—to get you into the Woman's Club? Then I hope you'll write on a subject that you know something about.

MRS. BARRINGTON. I have certainly tried to learn all I could about the Hottentots!

MRS. DE MARR. What! Do you mean to say you are writing about the Hottentots? Well, no wonder you're all fussed up. The club women have written about the most unheard-of things, but that beats them all.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Then you belong to the club and know all about the—

MRS. DE MARR. [*Contemptuously.*] Oh, no, I'm not a member; I don't know enough to join that club.

MRS. BARRINGTON. I suppose you feel as I do, that the members are so clever, reading, studying, and writing on all sorts—

MRS. DE MARR. Not at all. Do you know how they write their papers?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Do tell me, Mrs. De Marr; I'm looking for all the help I can get.

MRS. DE MARR. They take a lot of books from the library— [*Looks accusingly at the books in the case.* MRS. BARRINGTON *turns red.*] and copy whole pages.

MRS. BARRINGTON. How do you know?

MRS. DE MARR. My sister doesn't sit in the library—with her eyes shut.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Because they take out books from the library, it doesn't mean that they copy the text.

MRS. DE MARR. I heard a paper at the club myself—ahem—I was a guest of Mrs. Tompkins—I had read the whole thing in a book my sister gave me. Now, what more proof do you want?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Yes, but not verbatim?

MRS. DE MARR. I suppose it was for bait, but you see, I didn't bite. [*Laughs.*] Ha! ha! ha! They don't give anybody credit for knowing as much as they do, but they can't fool me. Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. BARRINGTON. That might happen—unexpected

interruptions might take so much time that the author couldn't finish—

MRS. DE MARR. Well, the way these women get themselves up to read their papers before the club doesn't look as if there was any lack of time. Why, my dear, they even run in debt to buy their clothes.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Really, Mrs. De Marr, I don't believe they spend more than—than—you or I, but they get from contact with other women, well, a style—what the French call “chic.”

MRS. DE MARR. Is that what you call it? Well, how many husbands do you suppose stay at home evenings while their wives are at the club getting style?

MRS. BARRINGTON. If they are like Mr. Barrington, they never think of going out.

MRS. DE MARR. What a simple woman you are, Mrs. Barrington. You certainly have a lot to learn about men.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, there are many places to—

MRS. DE MARR. That's what I found out when I joined a club. There were so many restaurants and movies that my husband liked to go to that he wanted me to join all the clubs.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Ecstatically.*] What a joy to feel that you could belong to all the clubs.

MRS. DE MARR. Joy, indeed, and let him go out every night.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Sympathetically.*] Oh, I see, his health is delicate. Night air didn't agree with him.

MRS. DE MARR. It agreed with him all right—but it was pretty hard on me— He talked all the time about a movie actress—

MRS. BARRINGTON. Really?

MRS. DE MARR. I didn't mind about the actress—but he lost interest in our neighbors and wouldn't listen to a word I said.

MRS. BARRINGTON. How you must have suffered—Don't you think children in the home keep a man's interest?

MRS. DE MARR. Not in the least. Men are just as

bad as the club women in that respect—They don't stay in the house long enough to know their own children. And how they let them behave!

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Piqued and impatient.*] Well, Mrs. De Marr, I am very proud of my children, and everybody says they behave beautifully.

MRS. DE MARR. Well, Mrs. Barrington, if I had children, money would never tempt me to neglect them for the sake of belonging to a club— [*Rises.*] I might speak a little plainer,—but I never under any circumstances give advice to my neighbors.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Rises.*] A very good rule, Mrs. De Marr,—must you go?

MRS. DE MARR. Yes, I must be going— Good-bye and— [*As MRS. BARRINGTON shakes hands and is accompanying MRS. DE MARR to rear door, loud talking is heard on left. ROSALIND rushes in frightened and shouting, holding up skirt, and mounts on MRS. DE MARR's chair.*]

ROSALIND. De mouse! de mouse! de mouse! [*MRS. DE MARR and MRS. BARRINGTON rush toward chairs. MRS. BARRINGTON stands on her desk chair, MRS. DE MARR on right centre chair. They all wrap their skirts around them.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Where, where is the mouse?

ROSALIND. Ma'am, I wus upsta'rs a makin' er de bed, uh, uh, and Marser John he com' and he sez ter look at him. I did look at Marser John, I did, den he sez look at de bed. I look at de bed and der wuz a mouse, uh, uh, uh, a runnin' on de sheet, uh, uh, uh!

MRS. BARRINGTON. Rosalind, go and ask Master John to come down.

ROSALIND. [*Rolling her eyes.*] Lord a massy, ma'am, I can't go nohow, uh, uh, uh!

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Calls.*] John! John! John!

JOHN. [*Enters left door.*] Yes, maw, I'm here.

MRS. BARRINGTON. John, quick, get the trap and catch the mouse.

JOHN. He don't need no trap, maw. [*JOHN puts*

his hand on his pocket flap, holding the mouse; goes toward ROSALIND, who shakes with terror.]

ROSALIND. Uh, uh, uh— [MRS. DE MARR holds up her skirt and measures distance from JOHN.]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Take him away! Take him away!

JOHN. Say, don't be scared of a nice little mouse.

ROSALIND. Uh, uh, uh, Marser John! [JOHN next moves toward MRS. DE MARR.]

MRS. DE MARR. [Terrified and holding skirt a little tighter.] Don't come near me, you rascal!

JOHN. [Takes mouse out of his pocket and puts it on the floor.] Maw, I'll lend him to you. [The two women dance up and down on their chairs until they notice that the mouse makes a humming noise and runs round and round in a circle. They watch it until it runs down. ROSALIND stands on her chair.]

MRS. BARRINGTON. [Steps down.] Oh, it's a mechanical mouse!

[ROSALIND, still frightened and perplexed, stands on her chair after MRS. BARRINGTON has stepped down.]

ROSALIND. Ma'am, is de mouse dead?

MRS. BARRINGTON. No, Rosalind; he never was alive—it's just a toy mouse.

ROSALIND. I nebber did seed that kind o' mouse befo'. [During the following she looks suspiciously at the mouse and begins to come off her chair; stops and looks at the mouse and begins to descend, but isn't convinced that the mouse will not run after her. She returns and stands firmly on chair. Gradually, with her terrified eyes on the mouse, she steps on the floor and moves toward the door.]

MRS. DE MARR. [Steps down.] So that's a sample of your son's beautiful behavior!

MRS. BARRINGTON. Oh, that's just one of John's jokes. I am so sorry he frightened you.

MRS. DE MARR. Well, I'll say good-bye to you—your beautiful son, his mouse, and your maid. Quite a menagerie! Ha! ha! [Laughs.] Good-bye.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Disturbed.*] Good-bye, Mrs. De Marr. [*Exit MRS. DE MARR rear door.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. What a gossiping woman, but why is she?—Oh—I remember she couldn't get into the club. I'll lock the door so that no one else can get in. [*Locks door.*]

ROSALIND. [*Trying to prevent her.*] Oh, ma'am, ple's' don't lock de door.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Why, Rosalind, you're not going out.

ROSALIND. Beggin' yo' pardon, ma'am, but I can't stay her' wid dat mous', and I can't stay in de ki'chen on count de bu'cher, and I 'feer'd, ma'am, dat Marser John he find mo' mice on de beds. I jest reckon' I hatter go dis time.

MRS. BARRINGTON. But, Rosalind, you said you couldn't leave my love.

ROSALIND. Dat mouse he skeer'd all de lub out o' me.

MRS. BARRINGTON. But if you'll stay, I'll give you some more.

ROSALIND. I'm dat skeered, ma'am, dat I ain't no good ter yo' nohow. I feels bad, I do, but I des musser git in' cloze en go, ma'am. [*Exit ROSALIND right.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Now I must do some rapid writing. [*Goes to desk and writes.*] "The Hottentots fought so desperately that they routed the Dutch. For some years they were not molested—|*Stops and listens as voices are heard outside.*| molested—molested."

MARY ANN. You should! [*Off stage rear.*]

MAN'S VOICE. I'll do nothing of the sort, Mary Ann. [*Knocking on rear door.*]

MARY ANN. Oh, yes, you will, because it's right.

MAN'S VOICE. [*Outside.*] Yes, you think it's right, but I think it's all wrong.

MARY ANN. [*Pounding on the door.*] Mother, unlock the door.

MRS. BARRINGTON. No, Mary Ann, I can't lose a minute. My paper—

MARY ANN. [*Still pounding.*] Mother, is your paper

more important than your daughter? You are an unnatural mother. You are neglecting—

MAN'S VOICE. Please, Mrs. Barrington, it is very important.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Writes and reads.*] "The English came to Cape Colony." [*Puts her hand up to her head in distress as she hears MARY ANN pound on back stage door.*]

MARY ANN. Mother, please unlock the door. Never mind the old Hottentots; attend to me!

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Distraught, but still writing and reading.*] "Took away the liberties of the Hottentots and reduced—reduced—" [*MARY ANN shakes the door.*]
MRS. BARRINGTON *with both hands up to her head in despair unlocks the door.* MARY ANN and PETER, *young and effeminate, fat and short, dressed in tennis suit, fall into the room talking and gesticulating.* MRS. BARRINGTON *dolefully sits at her desk and tries to read.*]

MARY ANN. I tell you, it is right.

PETER. I tell you, it's all wrong.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Dear me, what's the matter with you two?

PETER. She says I must—

MARY ANN. Of course he must.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Turns, facing PETER and MARY ANN.*] Must what?

PETER. Do all the things Mary Ann says.

MRS. BARRINGTON. What are all these "musts" about?

PETER. [*Counts them off.*] There are so many "musts," Mrs. Barrington. Mary Ann says I must vote and lecture for women's suffrage, I must carry a banner, and I must march in all the parades.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Of course, Peter, you'd cut a figure; but why must you?

PETER. But, Mrs. Barrington, that isn't nearly all the "musts."

MRS. BARRINGTON. Put your "musts" in your pocket. I cannot take time to discuss them now.

PETER. Please, Mrs. Barrington, don't make me wait. I must know this minute.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Another must, well, I'll add *two* more. You *must* both *go* and adjust your differences. I *must* work on my paper.

PETER. But the point is, Mrs. Barrington, unless I agree to these things today, Mary Ann will not promise to marry me.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [Greatly surprised.] Marry you!

PETER. Yes, Mrs. Barrington, that's what all this is about.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Oh, I see, Mary Ann has begun to train you already.

MARY ANN. Of course, I have; if you had started father right, you wouldn't have had to wait for Aunt Mary to make a will before you could get his permission to join the club.

PETER. You see, I love Mary Ann, and I hope she loves—

MARY ANN. Not unless you promise to—

PETER. To march. Why, it hurts my feet, Mary Ann, and I'm too short anyway to carry a banner. Don't you think she might carry the banner?

MARY ANN. Peter, I don't want a coward. Even if you are little, you might be a hero.

MRS. BARRINGTON. If you marry Mary Ann, Peter, you will be a hero.

PETER. But she says I must furnish a doctor's certificate to the effect that I have never smoked, chewed, nor indulged in alcoholic liquors, and that I must subscribe to the single standard of morality.

MRS. BARRINGTON. All these things are of vital importance if you wish to marry Mary Ann.

MARY ANN. [Jubilant.] There, Peter, you see mother agrees with me.

PETER. Oh, well, if you both think I ought to, I'll do it, but I can't stretch my imagination to the other requirement.

MRS. BARRINGTON. What is it, Peter?

PETER. She insists that I must take a course in the

"Bringing-up of Children" at the Domestic Science School for Fathers.

MARY ANN. Well, why shouldn't you?

PETER. I suggested, Mrs. Barrington, that we might wait until—we had—we had—the children—

MARY ANN. That'll be too late. You'll be too busy taking care of them.

PETER. Couldn't I leave them for an hour or so in the evening?

MARY ANN. Not much. I might miss a suffrage meeting.

PETER. When there is no meeting, wouldn't you give me an evening off?

MARY ANN. If you love me you'll stay at home every evening and tend the children.

PETER. Mary Ann, I do love you. I can't live without you. If I agree to take the Domestic Science Course for Fathers, and tend the children when they cry, and agree never to go out in the evening—

MARY ANN. Don't forget that I must have a chummy roadster.

PETER. You can't expect me to buy a chummy roadster on \$1,300 a year. [*Takes box of candy out of his pocket.*] Wouldn't this box of candy do instead?

MARY ANN. Peter, do you think I could love a man who offers me candy when I want a chummy roadster?

PETER. Well, where can I get the money to buy one?

MARY ANN. Understand, I'll have nothing to do with you until you have the money. Why, you have no more backbone than a shrimp. I ask nothing of you, and you balk like a steer. [*Exit MARY ANN left door.*]

PETER. [*Drops head in his hands on back of chair centre stage.*] Mrs. Barrington, you heard what she said. She won't marry me. I'm not a shrimp, and I don't balk like a steer.

MRS. BARRINGTON. It's quite bad enough loving Mary Ann, but marrying Mary Ann might be a great deal worse.

PETER. No one gives me any sympathy.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Peter, do you want my advice?
[*Turning round, stops writing.*]

PETER. Oh, yes, anybody's advice.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Stay and help me. If I don't finish this paper by ten o'clock, I shall lose \$100,000.

PETER. Oh, Mrs. Barrington, wouldn't that be dreadful, and I'm to blame, but won't you have some candy?
[*Offers her candy.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. This is no time for candy, Peter, but help me. Get pen and ink and copy this part of my manuscript. [PETER goes to desk, gets pen and paper, leaves box open.]

PETER. If you get the \$100,000, you'll buy a chummy roadster?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Oh, I'll buy anything to get this paper done.

PETER. Then Mary Ann could let me off on the chummy roadster. I could do the rest. The course in bringing up—

MRS. BARRINGTON. Forget Mary Ann and get ready to do copying. [MRS. BARRINGTON takes manuscript and places it in front of PETER.] Now will you begin here. [PETER sighs and begins to copy. MRS. BARRINGTON goes back to desk, writes, looks up suddenly.] I have it, Peter, I have it.

PETER. The chummy roadster?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Oh, no. I see how I can save time.

PETER. [*Face falls.*] Oh!

MRS. BARRINGTON. Mrs. De Marr said that the papers read before the club were not original, but were copied from books. If I do that, I may be able to finish—

PETER. Mary Ann wouldn't approve of that at all.

MRS. BARRINGTON. I can't help it, Peter. I am desperate.

[*Enter ROSALIND, right door, dressed for street in gay attire—short skirt with white stockings, fancy shoes, feathers; carries two big boxes, a bag, an umbrella, a fan; hair done in a prolonged psyche knot while hat goes*

up in proportion; moves down centre toward MRS. BARRINGTON.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Oh, Rosalind, I haven't time now to speak to you. You—

ROSALIND. I des hatter go, ma'am. Yo' a gwine ter pay me, ma'am?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Yes, yes. If I can find some money. [*Turns to desk, looks for money, pulls out papers and drawers. Scattering them on the floor, she finally hands ROSALIND a bill. ROSALIND in trying to take it drops her things and picks each up in turn, and finally takes money and puts it into her belt, while MRS. BARRINGTON sits and writes.*]

ROSALIND. I' mighty sorry ter leb yo' lub, ma'am, but I nebber could gitter useter Marser John and hi' mouse, nor ter de bu'cher, nor de marser. I lub you; an' I v'ry, v'ry sorry, but I des musser go. Go'by, ma'am. [*Makes an elaborate bow and her hat falls off. She picks it up and, after balancing herself and her baggage, goes.*] Go'by, ma'am. Go'by, Marser.

MRS. BARRINGTON. If I ever write another paper, I'll begin two years ahead. Peter, have you finished copying? [*PETER shakes his head.*] Oh, Peter, copy, copy faster and faster. When you've finished that, take this big book [*Hands PETER big book.*] and copy from here to there. I have hardly time to dress for the club. Remember Mary Ann and the chummy roadster depend upon your speed in copying. [*Exit MRS. BARRINGTON left door.*]

PETER. [*Copies as he reads.*] "The Hottentots were so useful to the English that, had it not been for—[*Gazing in space.*] for Mary Ann, they would have lost the Boer War. Arthur Fummerman seeing—seeing—her cruelty tried to arouse sympathy and to give justice to the lover. The plan was to reserve for them—for them—a chummy roadster just as the American people have done for their Indians."

[*JOHN enters right door, dressed in soldier's uniform with father's high boots on and carrying a drum. Does a military march, beating his drum, and stubbing his toes,*

stops.] Gatling guns and submarines, Peter, what you doing here?

PETER. Working for a chummy roadster.

JOHN. That's a funny way to work for a chummy roadster.

PETER. It seems funny when you're young, but when you're as old as I, it's pretty serious.

JOHN. Well, I'll tell you what I'm doing. I'm Uncle Sam looking for the Kaiser, but, gee! my boots flop so I can't march fast enough to catch him. [*Love song begins off stage.*]

PETER. [*Gets up with rapt expression; listens.*] Listen, that's Mary Ann singing. Oh, I'm going to her. [*Rushes through right door, leaving on table two separate piles of papers and a box of candy.*]

JOHN. I don't know what he's got; but he's got it. [*Looks at his boots, singing off stage stops, marches back and forth beating drum.*] These boots are so big I can't march in them. Gee! I know what I'll do. [*Sees papers. Grabs the first pile, sits down on floor, takes boots off and stuffs papers into the toes. Gets up, marches around stage again trying his boots. Beats drum while he says*]:—

With my boots all stuffed so fine,

I can surely reach the Rhine.

I'll give the Kaiser fits,

And kick him into bits.

That's what I'll do with my big shoes,

For Yankee Doodle Doo's.

Gee whiz, this drum strap hurts my neck. [*He takes off drum and leaves it on centre chair and discovers PETER'S box of candy.*] Gosh! Look at the candy. [*Takes a handful and puts into his mouth; chews with complete satisfaction until he hears PETER'S voice, when he hurriedly empties the box into mouth and pockets; runs and gets behind right centre screen, leaving his drum on the table. PETER and MARY ANN enter rear door, with tennis racquets, hats, and sweaters.*]

MARY ANN. [*Looking at empty candy box.*] Oh, the candy's all gone.

PETER. Never mind, if you'll only love me, I'll buy all you want. [*Grinning sheepishly and moving toward MARY ANN.*] You do, don't you?

MARY ANN. [*Moving away.*] Well, I can't tell you until you get the money to buy—

PETER. When your mother gets the \$100,000, she is going to buy the chummy roadster. Tell me that you love me, just a little bit. [*Tries to put his arm around MARY ANN's waist.*]

MARY ANN. [*Pushes his arm away.*] Oh, no, Peter, none of that—yet; not until you promise that you'll never oppose me in anything.

PETER. I'll promise, if you'll only love me.

MARY ANN. Yes, yes, I think I do, but you'll take the course—

PETER. I'll take anything, and I'll take a kiss right now. [*Kisses MARY ANN, making considerable noise.*]

JOHN. [*Looks over screen, laughs, and imitates noise of kiss.*] Doughnuts and peppermints, that's some kiss. [*Continues to imitate kiss.*] Ha! ha! I'll squeal on you. I'll tell maw and paw and Sybil. [*MARY ANN is decidedly embarrassed.*]

PETER. You rascal, you took the candy. But say, John, if you'll promise not to tell, I'll give you another box.

JOHN. I have had all I want, and I'll tell what nice noisy candy kisses Mary Ann gives. [*Imitates kiss.*]

MARY ANN. [*Starts toward JOHN.*] I'll give you a thrashing. [*Discovers JOHN's drum on chair, picks it up, and turns to JOHN; she beats the drum while she sings :—*

Johnnie, get your drum, get your drum.

Johnnie, get your drum, get your drum.

JOHN. Gee, Mary Ann, don't take my drum. If you'll give it back, I won't squeal on you, honest I wont.

MARY ANN. Then promise.

JOHN. [*Crosses himself.*] Honest Injun, I promise.

MARY ANN. [*Gives him drum.*] Here, take your drum and get out quick.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Enters in a very hurried man-*

ner, well gowned for club, goes to table, looks at papers.] What, you back, Mary Ann? Peter, I am ready for my paper.

PETER. [*Looks admiringly at MARY ANN, but answers indifferently.*] It's over there on the table.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Looking over papers.*] These aren't my copied papers. These are only mixed-up sheets.

PETER. Why, I left the copied papers in a pile on that table.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Peter, please attend to me. Come here and show me the pile.

PETER. [*Goes to table, looks over papers, is surprised.*] They're not here, but I swear I left them right here on this spot.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Well, you see they're not here now.

PETER. [*Handling the sheets.*] Couldn't we put these together?

MRS. BARRINGTON. No, they're not nearly all there. Why in the world did I ever trust them to you?

PETER. Now you'll think I won't be able to take care of Mary Ann.

MRS. BARRINGTON. A man in love can't be trusted with anything.

PETER. [*Pathetically.*] You will let me have Mary—

MARY ANN. Peter, I won't marry you unless mother gets the money, so get busy and look for the papers. Let's all look for them. [*All look for them except MRS. BARRINGTON, who in despair slumps into a chair weeping.*]

MRS. BARRINGTON. Find them tomorrow when it is too late. It's after ten o'clock now. Oh, I won't be able to join the club or tell them about the Hottentots, and we'll lose Auntie's money. Oh, dear! It's dreadful!

MARY ANN. Has there been anybody in the room?

PETER. I was here when I heard you singing.

MARY ANN. Never mind me, Peter. Tell us where you left mother's papers.

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Enters rear door, looks at watch.*] What! haven't you gone, Bertha? It's ten fifteen now.

MRS. BARRINGTON. [*Goes to MR. BARRINGTON.*] Oh, George, it's dreadful!

MR. BARRINGTON. What's dreadful?

MRS. BARRINGTON. We won't get Auntie's money.

MR. BARRINGTON. Why, what's the matter? Haven't you finished your paper yet?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Of course I finished it.

MR. BARRINGTON. Then why don't you take it and go?

MRS. BARRINGTON. Peter left it—

MR. BARRINGTON. What on earth was Peter doing with your paper?

MRS. BARRINGTON. While I was dressing, Peter finished copying it, and when I came down, it was gone. [*PETER is frightened.*]

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Angrily.*] Peter, get that paper and give it to Mrs. Barrington.

PETER. [*Terrified.*] I left it—

MR. BARRINGTON. [*Goes toward PETER and takes hold of him.*] Never mind where you left it. Do you hear what I say?

MRS. BARRINGTON. George, don't hurt Peter. He isn't to blame; I'm to blame.

MR. BARRINGTON. Of course he's to blame. He lost your paper, didn't he?

MRS. BARRINGTON. There wouldn't have been a paper to lose if I hadn't told Aunt Mary that I wanted to join the club and that you wouldn't let me unless—unless—
[*MR. BARRINGTON relaxes his hold on PETER.*]

MR. BARRINGTON. Unless what? Out with it.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Unless she made her will that way.

MARY ANN. Bully for you, mother!

MR. BARRINGTON. Bertha Barrington, you—you dared to tell her that!

MRS. BARRINGTON. I'm sorry to offend you, George, but I did so want to belong to the club that I asked Aunt Mary to put it just as she did—in her will,

MR. BARRINGTON. You deceitful woman! You deserve to lose every penny of the \$100,000.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Really, dear, it will be terrible if we lose that money, but you have given me permission to join the club, haven't you?

MR. BARRINGTON. No—not until you find your paper.

[JOHN enters, beating his drum and marching, indifferent to the scene.]

MARY ANN. John, you were here. Did you see mother's papers lying on the table?

JOHN. I don't care nothing 'bout old papers. I am going to catch the Kaiser with my big boots.

MR. BARRINGTON. [Seizes JOHN by the collar.] John, you rascal, stop beating that drum. Did you see a pile of papers on the table?

JOHN. Sure, sure, Paw, those old papers, I know where they are.

MR. BARRINGTON. [Shaking JOHN.] Where are they? Quick!

JOHN. I stuffed them into my boots. [MRS. BARRINGTON, MARY ANN and PETER strike different attitudes in consternation and rush round JOHN, centre stage lower. MR. BARRINGTON lands JOHN on the floor. MARY ANN seizes right boot and pulls it off. PETER seizes left boot and pulls it off. They grab papers, pass them to MR. BARRINGTON, who passes them to MRS. BARRINGTON.]

ALL. Boots! boots! boots!

MR. BARRINGTON. From Hottentots to Boots!

JOHN. [Squirming.] Mary Ann, you're pulling my leg off.

PETER. [Counting sheets; telephone rings.] 4—5—6—8—10.

MARY ANN. [Counting sheets; telephone rings—stops.] 7—9—11—I'd like to take your legs off. [Telephone rings again and keeps ringing.]

MR. BARRINGTON. Oh! that telephone; here, Bertha, take your papers and see that you hang on to them this time. [Goes to telephone.]

PETER. [Counting sheets.] 12—13—14—15.

MR. BARRINGTON. Hello—yes—what?

MARY ANN. [*Counting sheets.*] 16—17—18—19.

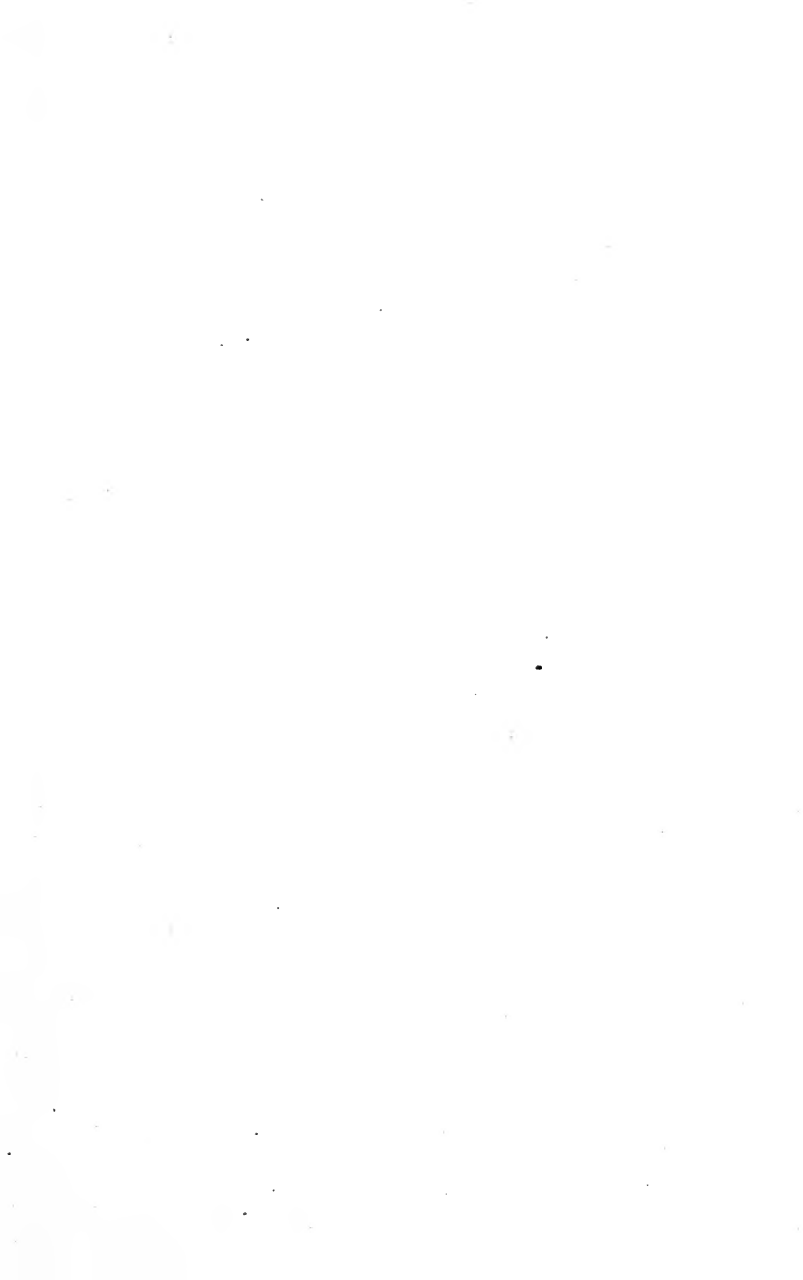
MR. BARRINGTON. What's that? [*Puts hand behind ear; irritable.*] Keep quiet—I can't hear while you are all talking!

MARY ANN. [*Whispers and looks at Mrs. BARRINGTON.*] 20.

[*Mrs. BARRINGTON puts the papers together and nods approval; she starts to rush out, but Mr. BARRINGTON waves his hand, indicating that she must stop. She stops.*]

MR. BARRINGTON. Gone, no, she is just going. [*To Mrs. BARRINGTON.*] Hold on, Bertha. Yes, yes, I'll take the message—the Secretary forgot to notify Mrs. Barrington—yes, I get that—candidates for membership are not admitted to the business meeting at ten o'clock—but are requested to present—to present their papers at eleven o'clock—you said eleven—yes, yes, I'll tell her—

[CURTAIN.]



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